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AUTHOR Axford, Barbara E.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The affective training component of the counselor education program at the University of Houston is described in this report. The goals of the affective training program are to enable the student to improve his self-awareness through self-exploration and to improve the effectiveness of his professional and interpersonal behavior. Implicit in the approach of the training program are the basic assumptions that a) counseling effectiveness can be enhanced through increasing effectiveness in a general interpersonal setting; b) self-awareness augments interpersonal effectiveness; c) people have a need for insight into human behavior; and d) learning is reciprocal. The goals of the program are achieved through the following procedures: a) student-faculty retreats, b) psycholcgical assessment tests and feedback sessions, c) affective learning modules, and d) video tape feedback. Evaluation of student performance in module activities and video tape sessions is accomplished through both subjective and objective assessment. (HMD)

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A NEW EMPHASIS ON AFFECTIVE TRAINING*

Too often the focus in education has been on content and method. Feelings and emotions were ignored, the implication being that feelings were to be hidden. As a result, counselor educators had been training counselors to use only half of their potential. They were not being helped to use their emotions effectively.

The Counselor Education Department at the University of Houston focuses on the uniqueness of the individual as a contribution to a total educational program. Through this affective component of a total program, students are helped to recognize and respond to their feelings and to the feelings of others, to use these empathically and to become more sensitive and effective human beings in their profession as counselors.

However, when considering emotions, counselors often

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*This manuscript was prepared by Barbara E. Axford, Graduate Assistant, Fred C. Proff, Departmental Chairman, Mary Ann Stephens, Graduate Assistant, and G. Robert Ward, Professor, Counselor Education Department, College of Education, University of Houston, Houston, Texas 77004.

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talk about wanting to be spontaneous, to act-out their feelings and to free themselves from their own hidden emotions. Some appear to subscribe to the philosophy that if they could only throw away the content and method they would then be free to experience their feelings. As Newman and Berkowitz (1971) have observed:

> People say they want to let go. What they really need to do is take hold. Only when you're really in charge of yourself can you afford to let go; to be spontaneous and expect good to come out of it . . . . (p. 50).

In essence what this affective training attempts to accomplish is to free counselors from their culturally learned inhibitions which prevent full enjoyment of life and yet to use their emotions appropriately and in a responsible manner.

The philosophy of the total program is similar to that expressed by Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1964):

> Each affective behavior has a cognitive behavior counterpart of some kind and vice versa. An objective in one domain has a counterpart in the opposite domain, though often we do not take cognizance of it . . . . Each domain is sometimes used as a means to the other, though the more common route is from the cognitive to the affective. Theory statements exist which permit us to express one in terms of the other and vice versa (p. 62).

In the Counseling training program an attempt is made to deal with both domains simultaneously. However, this paper will address itself to the affective component of the graduate program in Counselor Education.

GOALS

The two major goals of this affective component are to increase both self exploration and interpersonal effectiveness. The approach rests on several basic assumptions:

* A counselor's behavior in a counseling setting is similar to his behavior in a general interpersonal setting; therefore, increasing one's effectiveness in a general interpersonal setting would increase the probability of his effectiveness in counseling.
* Interpersonal effectiveness is enhanced by self-awareness. The mature person develops a consciousness and a sense of self through appropriate responses to and from others.
* People have a need for insight into human behavior--their own as well as others.
* The educator serves a similar function to the counselor in that he serves as a resource person and as a partner in the learning process. This implies that learning is reciprocal.

AFFECTIVE TRAINING

Based on the above four assumptions, the affective training begins with self-awareness. The program seeks to accomplish this in several ways: a retreat, psychological assessment, affective modules and videotape feedback.

Retreat

A retreat is the student's first exposure to the program. This is an off-campus event in which students have an opportunity to become better acquainted with themselves, with other students and with the faculty in their professional training program.

The focus of the retreat is first on self-awareness--giving students an opportunity to discover some of their own unique qualities. Later, attention is directed toward building teams that will work together both at the retreat and back on campus. The teams provide a "home base" for each student and serve as working units for professional training. For example, these units are used for participation in the affective modules and in videotaping sessions on campus.

While at the retreat, the members of the newly-formed teams begin various activities relevant to their professional growth. Some examples of the activities are as follows: an auction exercise for clarification of values, formation of small groups and negotiation with the other groups to establish larger "home base" groups, role playing critical incidents in triads and mini-counseling sessions. Immediately following these counseling sessions, the participants are critiqued by the group with the aid of recordings of the sessions.

The retreat thus provides an opportunity for new students to get to know themselves, their fellow students and the

faculty in an informal and meaningful way. It also offers them an opportunity to get their feet wet in their professional training program.

Psychological Assessment

The second aspect of this affective training, Psychological Assessment, is designed to help the student gain further understanding of himself. The testing program is divided into two parts: an Initial Test Battery and feedback and the Personal Assessment Battery and feedback.

The Initial Test Battery is administered to students early in the first semester of their professional training program. This generates data regarding an individual's attitudes, needs, motivation and degree of openness. Examples of tests that have been used are the Opinion Scale, California Psychological Inventory and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule. Interpretations of test results are presented to students in small groups--the focus here is on helping each student confront such questions as: What are my goals in life? What do I want to obtain from my professional training? What are some appropriate sub-goals for me?

In essence, this battery provides the student with some information about himself that can be used in making his training program more relevant for his own professional and personal growth. If a student wishes further assistance in

the understanding of his scores, he is free to consult with his instructors in private.

Later, the student is administered the Personal Assessment Battery (Bown, Menaker, Peck and Veldman, 1970) which is followed by a feedback session (Bown, Fuller, Newlove and Peck, 1970). These are designed to help each individual gain a more indepth understanding of his feelings and their effect on his behavior than was provided in the Initial Test Battery. Students complete a battery of psychological instruments. A counselor reviews the data provided by each student and develops a hypothetical profile on each individual which then becomes the basis of the Personal Assessment Feedback (PAF) session.

The orientation of the PAF session is developmental--not remedial. The counselor examines hypotheses derived from the assessment data. He doesn't evaluate, but gives impressions about the student as seen in his battery responses. The counselor recognizes that the student is an authority on himself and he encourages the student to use the feedback session to concentrate on his feelings, questions and concerns. Together they discuss the student's personal characteristics, how these are relevant to his professional goals and what the student might do to enhance his strengths and deal with his problems.

Each student is scheduled for one session with the counselor, but if he desires, he may return for more counseling

after he has had time to assimilate and integrate information from the first session.

Modular Learning

The next aspect of this affective training is modular learning. These self-paced units provide experiences that facilitate further self-exploration in the learning of interpersonal and institutional skills. Some of the modules are required of all students, others are prescribed when there is need for them. The student is the judge of his own readiness to progress from one level of difficulty to the next, as he attempts mastery of a series of activities. Examples of module topics include self-awareness, non-verbal interaction, communications and decision-making skills. The modules are designed to provide a continuation of the awareness experiences begun at the retreat.

Videotape Feedback

A fourth aspect of affective training is Videotape Feedback. Students are offered an opportunity to see themselves as others see them. Videotapes are made of students in counseling sessions. Each student then views his tape with his supervisor. They discuss the taped behavior of the student in a constructive manner, focusing on helping the student to become more aware of his interaction with people and helping him to recognize behavior skills upon which he can build. Much

of what the student has already learned about himself in the psychological feedback sessions can be reinforced in these videotape feedback sessions.

EVALUATION

Trying to assess the quality of a student's performance is one of the most difficult tasks in education. The difficulty of this assessment has been brought about because of the following unresolved problems: no standardized or formal approach and the controversy between the two different objective and subjective approaches of assessing behavior. Using the objective approach the data are combined according to some clearly specified fashion, typically by means of some mathematical equation, and for the subjective approach, the data are studied by an expert and are integrated in an intuitive manner.

Resolution of the two systems that have been articulated above has not been attempted. Instead, an evaluation procedure which takes into consideration both approaches has been developed.

It should first be made explicit that the retreat activities and the data from the psychological assessment battery are not part of the evaluation process. These are strictly to aid in an individual's growth. They are intended to enhance the affective learning process, but are not subject to evaluation.

Each of the affective modules has its own evaluation procedure. The terminal objectives for each activity are specified in such a way that their achievement is obvious to both the one who has participated in the activity and others. The objectives are specific and observable. In the affective module, "Sharing Self with Others," Borgers and Ward (1972) state:

> Frequently human relationships are hypocritical and superficial; relationships are often tolerated rather than being events of happiness. If you . . . are to adjust to both yourself and others, you need to know yourself and your real feelings and desires.
>
> You . . . need to determine your own attitudes and life styles rather than relying solely on others. You need to decide whether you will be open or closed depending on the situation. In order to do this, you must be willing to know yourself and let yourself be known to others.

The terminal objective is exploratory in nature, and upon completion of this module, the student will have attended a seminar and participated in activities which emphasize nonverbal communication, empathic listening and receiving and giving congruent responses. These activities are designed to increase the student's awareness concerning his attitudes, life style and sharing with others. The module is completed when the student has had the opportunity to work in a group where the focus of the group is on feedback to the individual students concerning their respective interactions with the group and when the student is able to share with others in a more meaningful way.

Videotape feedback is a second assessment procedure which provides data, ideas and modifications for making a subjective type of evaluation. In the counseling sessions where the tapes are reviewed, supervisors are provided with a checklist of criterian behaviors to be observed. The supervisors then make evaluation as to the quality of the performance using a five-point scale ranging from unsatisfactory to excellent.

Periodic evaluations are made on students as they progress through the program. This enables the students to receive feedback as to how well they are learning and also to provide data to the department regarding how well the program is working.

SUMMARY

In summary, an attempt has been made to describe one approach to affective training in a counselor education program. Specific goals were stated as increasing self exploration and interpersonal effectiveness. Implicit in this approach are the basic assumptions that (a) counseling effectiveness can be enhanced through increasing effectiveness in a general interpersonal setting, (b) self-awareness augments interpersonal effectiveness, (c) people have a need for insight into human behavior and (d) that learning is reciprocal.

In the present program these goals are achieved through the following procedures: (a) a retreat, (b) psychological

assessment, (c) affective modules and (d) videotape feedback. Evaluation of the students' performance in module activities and videotape sessions is accomplished through both objective and subjective assessment.

The work so far has been stimulating and rewarding in terms of the program outcome for both student and faculty. But while the results have been gratifying, they are only the beginning. A continuous effort is being made to seek new ideas to improve what has already been developed, for in the final analysis the program itself is not as important as the effect is has on the participants. By emphasizing affective training it is hoped that the experiences will help to free the participants to understand their emotions and to use them in a responsible manner in order that they might become more personally and professionally effective.

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